

LA/W/S Newsletter

NOTES FROM THE CHAIR

Welcome back everyone to an unusual yet exciting semester! Despite the many challenges brought onto the University community by Covid 19, LAWS as a department continues to be active and engaged on campus providing many opportunities for faculty, students, and the community to come together and engage in meaningful dialogue on issues of race, gender, and diversity.



Many events have taken place this fall that are either sponsored by Latin American Studies or have a connection to the Women's and Gender Studies Program. On September 30th at 7pm via Zoom Dr. Javier Avila held a virtual presentation of his one-man show "The Trouble with My Name," a humorous look at the issues of citizenship, identity, and culture today. On October 14 at 5:00 pm via Zoom LAWS new faculty member Dr. Roxana Curiel (featured in this newsletter) led "Blackness in the Caribbean and Latin America," a conversation in English with Dr. Mayra Santos Febres and artist Alan Pelaez. Additionally, the Hope Horn Gallery featured an exhibit to honor the 19th amendment. The choice of images through paintings, watercolors, and prints features women who made art, women as subjects of art, and women in art professions. The exhibition is available on-line for viewing. In addition, there is a voice-over gallery lecture provided by Women's and Gender Studies faculty member, Darlene Miller-Lanning.



Our faculty members have been extremely productive in teaching, research, and service to the profession. Inside this newsletter you will find a summary of the faculty's various professional activities, a reflection on the nursing profession in times of Covid 19 by Dr. Wendy Manetti, a tribute to Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg by Dr. Jean Harris, and bios of the work studies who share their talents and energy with the LAWS department. In addition, the previously mentioned interview with Dr. Roxana Curiel.

Wishing everyone a happy and healthy semester!

Dear LAS Alumni, Students and Colleagues:

We begin our semester in the most unusual of circumstances and with the weight of a global pandemic resting on all of our shoulders. However, within this singular landscape, I am very proud of our community. My colleagues and staff have worked hard to adapt the campus and our fall courses to different learning formats: face to face, remote, hybrid. At every step, they have been committed to providing a supportive learning environment for our students.

I would also like to acknowledge the turbulent moment in U.S. race relations. Structural and state violence against Black people is a global condition. In the case of Latin America, police killings and disappearances of Amarildo de Souza, João Pedro Matos Pinto, Claudia Silveira Ferreira are only a few cases that show this sad hemispheric reality. The Latin American Studies Program is dedicated to understanding how systematic racism and exclusion has impacted racial justice throughout the hemisphere.

Also, we are devoted to addressing the curricular and co-curricular needs of students of color, particularly Latinx, Afro-Latinx, and all students of Caribbean and Latin American descent. LAS welcomes all who know these struggles to join our supportive intellectual community. During this Fall, our program shares an urgent commitment to understanding the experiences, challenges, and accomplishments of Afro-Latinxs within the U.S. For this reason, our extra-curricular events will focus on understanding and recognizing Afro-Latinx and indigenous cultures and histories. Please see information about these thought-provoking events in this newsletter.

As usual, our newsletter brings you snapshots from our students and faculty research; and our virtual film series. Let me finish this note by invoking the words of Cuban writer José Martí published in *My Race* (1893): “Men have no special rights simply because they belong to one race or another. When you say “men,” you have already imbued them with all their rights.”

Qué tengan un buen resto de semestre!

-Dr. Yamile Silva

LAS Director



Recent faculty research, publications, and pedagogy:



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SCRANTON
A JESUIT UNIVERSITY

Dr. Paul Datti:

Journal article. Dileo, R., Borkowski, N., O'Connor, S., Datti, P. A., & Weech-Maldonado, R. (in press, 2020).

"The association between designation as leader in LGBT healthcare equality and hospitals' patient experience scores." Data-based article submitted to the *Journal of Healthcare Management*.

Dr. Marzia Caporale :

Published a journal article. "Recasting the Gaze: Self-perception and Body De(con)struction in Nelly Arcan's 'La honte'" In *L'Esprit créateur* (Summer 2020). Additionally, she published a book review for Federici, Sandra, et Raphaël Thierry, coord. *Africa e Mediterraneo : Cultura e Società*. "Libri in Africa, libri d'Africa." In *Etudes Littéraires Africaines* Vol. 89. Spring 2020.

Dr. Josephine Dunn:

is completing the first phase of her research in women's local history. Her research focuses on specific women artists, lawyers, physicians, and art educators, 1880-1920 (pre-19th amendment). She also studies the women's club movement in Scranton, the local YWCA, the suffrage story in Scranton, the City Beautiful Movement, and History of the Everhart Museum. These "hidden histories" heretofore have not been the focus of scholarly research.

Dr. Ann Pang-White:

In the Spring of 2020, she taught her first Women's and Gender Studies course, "Women in Chinese and Western Philosophies." She was also appointed by the Board of Officers as the new executive director for the International Society for Chinese Philosophy, the largest academic society of its kind. She is the 2nd woman serving in this role in the Society's forty-five year history. Dr. Pang-White additionally completed an article for the *American Philosophical Association's Newsletter* entitled "My Philosophy Journey to the West," another article "Virtues and the *Book of Rites*" for the *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* (Blackwell-Wiley), and two book chapters for *Women Philosophers from Non-Western Traditions: The First Four Thousand Years* (Springer). She is currently working on her third book, which covers writings on Chinese women's philosophical and feminist thought from the 13th century to the 21st century.

Drs. Aiala Levy and Ann Pang-White:

are part of the inaugural cohort of faculty fellows at the Slattery Center for Humanities. Dr. Pang-White is a fellow this semester and Dr. Levy will be a fellow in the Spring. Dr. Levy will be working on her first book, *Cosmopolis: Theaters and the Making of an Urban Public in São Paulo, Brazil*.

Dr. Kim Pavlick:

was a member of a committee which received a \$2,000 Diversity Initiative Grant to provide campus-wide programming as a way to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the 19th amendment. In addition to Dr. Pavlick, members of the committee were: Jean Harris, Sam Gurn, Maria Marinucci, Rose Sebastianelli, Jodi Dunn, and Colleen Boyle. The first event of the semester was Sept. 17, Constitution Day. Members of the committee, volunteers, the UofS Speech Team and the Provost recorded a reading of the Constitution that was produced and aired on WUSR 99.5 at noon on that day. PRSSA coordinated contest giveaways and prizes including commemorative 19th Amendment t-shirts and 'Scranton Votes' pens.

Dr. Billie Tadros:

In the Department of English and Theater, Dr. Tadros redesigned two existing courses which were approved to receive the Women's and Gender Studies designation. The courses are "ENLT 224: *Perspectives in Literature about Illness* and ENLT 254: *Bodybuilding: Narratives of Health and Ability*. Dr. Tadros also participated in a working papers group at the virtual 2020 Rhetoric of Health and Medicine symposium in September, presenting a project entitled "The Erotics of Women's Running, and Narrating the Injured Erotic: Restoring and Re-storying, or How We Write the Body When We Can't Right the Body."

Finally, Dr. Tadros is working with senior English major Quinn Stanford, who has been awarded one of the Slattery Center for Humanities Student Fellowships, to pursue a manuscript of poems preceded by a theoretical introduction, both of which seek to problematize the question "What does it mean to be with/without gender?"

Meet the LA/W/S Work Study Students



My name is Samantha Gurn and I work in the Women's and Gender Studies / Latin American Studies office as a work study student. I am a junior Marketing major with English and Theater minors and a concentration in Women's and Gender Studies. I love performing and am active on campus with both theatre groups: the University of Scranton Players and LIVA Arts. I also work for Residence Life as an RA in region four and sing at mass for campus ministries. I decided to add a Women's and Gender Studies concentration because equality of the sexes has always been something important to me. Taking these courses with the university has been amazing. I have learned more about gender, sexuality, and equality that I hope to apply to my career one day. Our school offers some pretty great classes on the topics pertaining to Women's and Gender Studies, and I am so lucky to be a part of the program.



Hola, ¿qué tal? I'm Katia Ramirez and I work at the Latin American and Women's and Gender Studies department. I got involved with the Latin American and Women's and Gender Studies department because of my concentration, and a professor reached out to me who has helped me so much. I am indebted to her. Thank you, Dr. Silva! In addition to working there, I am also a Spanish and ESL Tutor at the Language Learning Center. A little about me is that my hometown is Atlanta, Georgia. I came to the University of Scranton because of someone special to me. I am currently a Junior here at the university, I am a double major in History and Hispanic studies and have a concentration in Latin American Studies. I absolutely love animals, I currently have 5 dogs and 2 guinea pigs. My weakness is playing video games too much, and my passion is helping people in any way I can.



LAS FALL FILMS

Unusual Languages

All films available on Kanopy!

I Dream in Another Language

(Mexico, 2017)

The last two speakers of a language haven't spoken to each other for 50 years. A linguist will undertake the challenge of convincing them to talk again, so he could record their language.

Guarani

(Paraguay/Argentina, 2015) Part road movie and part coming-of-age drama, this film portrays two generations of Paraguayans whose views of the world seem centuries apart. The film follows fisherman Atilio as he travels with his granddaughter, Iara.

Southern District

(Bolivia, 2011)

La Paz's Zona Sur neighborhood houses Bolivia's elite class. In an adobe-tile-roofed castle, a statuesque matriarch reigns over her spoiled offspring and indigenous servants. But social change, however unwelcome, is on its way.



Dr. Jean Harris reflects on Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Ruth Bader Ginsburg, the second woman appointed to the U.S. Supreme Court, passed away September 18th. Known to many as the Notorious RBG because of her powerful dissenting opinions, RBG was a hero in the ongoing battle for women's equal rights. RBG's focus on women's rights was likely sparked by comments of a Harvard Law School dean, who at a dinner party honoring women students asked each woman law student in RBG's class to explain what she was doing occupying a seat that could have been filled by a man. Finding that she, a young, married Jewish woman with a small child would not be hired by a law firm or as a law clerk in the 1960s, RBG became a law professor at Rutgers, and then the first woman promoted to full professor at Columbia.

As the first director of the American Civil Liberties Women's Rights Project, RBG argued numerous gender rights cases in the 1970s. At her confirmation hearing to the Supreme Court in 1993, RBG noted: "the response that I got from the judges before whom I argued when I talked about sex discrimination was: 'What are you talking about? Women are treated ever so much better than men.'" Supreme Court Chief Justice Roberts said of RBG: "Our nation has lost a jurist of historic stature.... Today we mourn, but with confidence that future generations will remember Ruth Bader Ginsberg as we knew her—a tireless and resolute champion of justice."

Interviews with Faculty

Dr. Roxana Curiel, Assistant Professor in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, and faculty member of LA/W/S.



Hi, Dr. Roxanna Curiel, tell me about yourself.

I'm from Mexico City, I earned my bachelor's degree in linguistics and Hispanic culture at Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México known as UNAM. I specialized in female writers (Rosario Castellanos) and received my PhD from the University of California, Riverside in Cultural Studies. I was a visiting Professor at Pepperdine University (2016-2018) and an Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow (2018-2020). I am more into studies of visual culture at the moment.

Visual Culture?

Visual culture as in queer and feminist theories.

How are you liking the University of Scranton so far?

It is really hard to say right now because I am teaching virtually. The only thing that has given me a grasp of the university is my students. The students are what is keeping me sane and I have discovered the university through my students.

Why do you think talking about race is important?

It is important to talk about race. I think anyone talking about race and racial injustice is a big issue. It has been important for a long time. For me, it started in Mexico, mainly for the privilege I have of being a Mestiza. I do not like being called a Mestiza, but it is what it is. We all know race is a social construct. It is very important to talk about it in classes and also to commit to an antiracist pedagogy. For me it is in my research and in everything I do.

Do you think it's worse in the U.S. or in Mexico?

I would say that it is just as bad both here in the United States and in Mexico. We just see it in different way. It is not that racism does not exist in Latin America, it's just that we [Hispanics and Latinos] do not want to hold racism for what it is. Instead we say it is classism or some other sort of discrimination, but it is really racism. As bad as it is in the United States, at least there is a conversation on abolition.

Personally, it is the only way to fight against racism. In Mexico, there are conversations of people asking if things are "racist." So, we're (Mexicans) so far behind from things we need to do to fight against social and racial injustices. In Latin America in general, they are still in denial on what racism is and how it works. However, there are groups that are fighting for people's rights and they do not have the support that people in the United States have. That is why I say the United States is slightly better off than Mexico because of the tools and understanding of how racism works and how we can dismantle it.

What steps do you think we have to take to end racism?

It is very complicated, but as I said, I believe in abolition as the most productive and hopeful way I have found in the past years; and to try and think of different conditions that can render our current reality (patriarchy, racism). I think that abolition thinking has to go through everything that we do not just ideology. That is why I implemented in my pedagogy simple things that my syllabus has, the way I speak to my students, how my students talk to me. If we want to change, we have to commit to an abolitionist agenda in everything we do. It sounds simple but it is not.

Do you think this election is important to advance in ways to stop racism?

I think this election is one of the most important for modern history in the United States.

It is not about Trump but what he represents. I think it is going to change a lot of things. What we see now is communities saying it is enough. We have seen that if we do not care about each other than the government is not going to do anything to change. This is why I keep going back to abolition because it is about communities of care and this is what we are witnessing on streets (helping each other get food, pay bills, and more). These communities are what give me hope. Whatever the result of the election is, it is going to be intense and it is going to be important. I think it is important to keep caring for each other. We have to keep concentrating on that. We have to keep fighting for abolition, meaning taking care of each other and creating conditions to not depend the state.

Interviews with Faculty

Interview with Dr. Michael Allison, Professor and Chair, Department of Political Science

Tell me a little about yourself, what you studied and did.

As an undergrad at Fairfield in Connecticut I majored in Political Science and minored in Latin American and Caribbean Studies and Peace and Justice studies. I began to study more Latin America in Argentina, abroad then in Mexico, Oaxaca and Jamaica.

Then as a Grad Student I applied for a Fulbright and did it in El Salvador where I viewed the Political party in El Salvador. After 1 to 1 1/2 years I traveled and did hitch-hiking to get around. Then came back and went to Venezuela for a month. Afterwards I went ahead to graduate school for Political Science with an emphasis in Latin America in Florida State University in Tallahassee.

I came to Scranton in 2006 teaching international classes, US Latin American relations.

One of which you were in.

Yes.

Do you think Latinos and Hispanics are important for this election?

Everyone has an important role to use their rights and participate in the electoral process.

We've seen Latinos play a bigger role in the United States most recently particularly California, Florida and in the southern states. There are about 50 million people of Latino and Hispanic descendant in the United States. Most Latinos historically have evaluated a candidate the same way everyone else does.

For example: What is their position in running the economy, how are they going to make jobs, and in some instances, there are particular Diaspora issues. In Florida politics, Cubans are concerned of what is going to happen in Cuba. Also, in Florida, Puerto Rico has played a bigger role since the hurricanes. Nicaraguans and Venezuelans are more concerned about what candidates will bring politically to their country. However, most Latinos and Hispanics look at schools, opportunity, jobs just like Americans. In Political Science they (Hispanic and Latinos) evaluate what is happening in the United States.

How will this election affect Latin America?

It really depends on who wins the election and what the future holds.

Biden and Trump have difficulty advancing in the regions of Latin America such as: economic encouragement, economic sanctions (Venezuela, Nicaragua). The United States has more of a unilateral approach that hasn't been very successful. Before Trump the United States had a more multilateral approach that tackled the problems. For example: The end of civil war in Colombia, and open travel to Cuba. Additionally, there hasn't been a very strong positive environment since 2009 because the United States has not done a nice job on immigration, they still don't know what causes people to leave their home country (if we focus on Guatemala Honduras and El Salvador). Most people want to go back Pre-Trump.

What do you think of their immigration policies?

Both, Bidens' and Trumps' plan is not very welcoming and very confusing. Biden is not very enthusiastic on immigration. This election is like choosing between awful and bad quite frankly. Biden might be a little more favorable because of the activism in the democratic party as they take a more humane approach to immigration.



COVID-19 Impact on Nursing Students

Dr. Wendy Manetti.

Associate Professor of Nursing

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an enormous impact on all of us. I want to share the incredible experience of two courageous University of Scranton nursing students who cared for COVID-19 patients on the frontline during the height of the pandemic. Christiana Reinertsen worked as a nurse extern on the resource team in her hometown hospital in New York. During the pandemic, she worked many hours typically in the evenings on the 3-11 shift. Eventually, her entire hospital had COVID-19 patients on all units. Jessica Wroblewski worked as a patient care technician in a hospital in her hometown of New Jersey. She typically worked the night shift, 11p-7a, on a telemetry-stroke unit. During the pandemic, her unit became a COVID-19 designated unit, meaning that they only cared for COVID-19 patients. Both student nurses conveyed the overwhelming challenges that they and other health care team members faced during this time.

Although the two novices felt helpless at times, they did their best to make a difference. Christiana facilitated many zoom video calls between patients in intensive care and their families because the patients were unable to do this themselves. Jessica said, as time went on, her own fears diminished, and she spent more quality time in the room with patients. Simply being present in the moment can really change a person's outlook.

Despite it all, Christiana and Jess found positives in the experience. Both agreed, the bonding, support, and teamwork among the nurses and the entire hospital community stood out by far as most rewarding. The sense that you were not alone was palpable. Christiana said nurses came from all over the United States to help. These incredibly genuine nurses wanted to serve in any way. Christiana and Jess are more determined than ever to fulfill the role of a professional nurse, a selfless calling to care for the most vulnerable no matter the circumstances. Few careers offer the opportunity to feel deep in your heart that you made a difference in someone's life whether that be for minutes, hours, days, or years. Nurses willingly accept the risks inherent of their profession.

In Christiana's words, "giving up is simply not an option". Perhaps it's best said on a coffee mug, Jess's dad gave her, "nursing, the hardest job you'll ever love". In an email Christiana sent to the nursing faculty in March 2020, she said "being able to be with these patients means more to them, their families and myself than I could have imagined. Right now, going into work is one of the only things that makes any sense to me." Yet, Christiana and Jess do not consider themselves heroes. I do. They and many others like them are courageous and mature beyond their years. What they have shared is only a glimpse into the cruel reality of what they lived during the pandemic. Let their stories be the voice for all nurses as I am inspired by their spirit and goodness.

Dr. Wendy Manetti.
Associate Professor of Nursing

